



The Meaning Of Faith

Charles S. Price

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by
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1. The Collapse of Faith

Within the memory of most of us is the time when both the Church and the world seemed to possess certain of the elements of faith. With the dying of the Victorian era the Church seemed to be impregnated with the spirit of evangelism. The great preachers of Christendom thundered forth the truths of God; and in stately cathedral, as well as village chapel, worshipers listened to sermons that were vitalized with faith in God.

Even though they had long since passed away, the preachers who followed the great Reformation continued to live and to exert their influence in the lives of the men who had followed them. They might have differed on questions of church government, and in some instances on doctrinal interpretation, but every one of them could sing lustily, "Faith of Our Fathers," and on the great fundamentals they stood together as one man.

The influence of that Church was felt throughout Christendom. As a matter of fact, the dynamics of its preaching exerted an influence in every country under the sun. In the chronology of God it was undoubtedly the era of Philadelphia. Without question it was the Philadelphian Church. It was the age that contributed more to revivals, to foreign missionary enterprise, to the opening of city missions, to street meetings--and to other channels of aggressive service--than any preceding age since the days of the apostles.

Scintillating like stars in the heavens are the names of illustrious men of faith--firebrands of God's truth who crossed the burning sands of India, surmounted the great wall of China, penetrated the dark jungles of Africa, and raised the standard of the cross in every continent and on every isle of the sea. It was a day of aggressive Christianity. It was the time when the Holy Spirit, with miracles of confirmation, inspired thousands of soldiers of the cross to do wonderful exploits in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was, in short, an era of faith. God called it "Philadelphia."

Then came the deluge. Like the breaking down of the walls of a mammoth dam, the floodwaters of unbelief, of doubt, and of fear surged, and raged, and roared as they flowed irresistibly on, carrying everybody and everything in their cataclysmic flow. Nobody escaped, in world or in church, except those who climbed to the spiritual high places and beheld with consternation, and with broken hearts, the raging, swelling waters that were at their feet.

They saw the things that they had built through the service of the past years collapse like a house of cardboard before the fury of the storm. Ideals, moral standards--the faith of the fathers--were all relentlessly carried away on the shoulders of the tempest to be deposited on the plains of Laodicea, or in the dark valleys of atheism and unbelief.

Previous to that time even the world had some degree of faith. Men who never entered church believed in it. There were some Voltaires and a few Thomas Paynes, but the average man on the street, even though he was unsaved, believed in God and acknowledged the power of salvation. The churches were well attended; the hymns that were sung vibrated with gospel truth; the prayers were fervent; and nearly everybody believed that God was in His Heaven though all was not well with the world. That, of course, was before the deluge.

A great many people blame the World War [World War I--Editors] for the collapse of the church, and especially for the collapse of the faith of the average man in the church and in spiritual things. The World War was undoubtedly the climax, but there were many contributing factors that preceded it. There had been a battle for some time against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Thomas Payne, the agnostic, had called it an age of reason. Huxley, with his scientific turn of mind, had attacked the citadels of faith with the broadswords of his intellectual concepts. Darwin had given us his Origin of Species, and though he was ridiculed and repudiated by most of the church and many men of science, yet he kept pounding away with his theory until it began to take disastrous effect. The Church for a long time held its ground, although there were some minor surrenders on the battlefield of human life.

The universities entered into the conflict, and so-called professors began at first to insinuate their diabolic and unreasonable teaching, and by innuendo attempted to corrupt the rising generation of that day. Those boys were to become the cannon fodder on the battlefield of the greatest war that the world has ever known. The seed had been planted in the heart and mind, but it had not yet brought forth full fruitage. It is a fundamental law of the eternal God that if there is a sowing there must be a harvest. What a terrible and tragic harvest it was!

The Church had been preaching peace and safety. The philosophers of the world had declared that we were too highly civilized to slay each other upon the battlefield. I have been in the Peace Palace at the Hague; and as I walked along its corridors and beheld the contributions that the nations of the world made to its furnishings, the pictures on the wall seemed to laugh at me; the books held me in scorn (thousands of them were on the subject of international peace); and yet every one of them had stood upon the same shelves while their open ears could listen to the thundering of the artillery and the tramp, tramp, tramp of marching feet. The press and the pulpit had joined hands and both declared that war was an outlaw and would never be tolerated in a civilized world, but that the so-called civilized world was forgetting God.

Reason was rooting up the flowers of faith from the garden of the soul, and planting in their places the brambles and the cacti of doubt and unbelief. Then, I say, came the final conflagration. A world that went to bed under the smiling of the summer sun was awakened by the roaring and raging of the god of war. When the fighting was over--when the millions of corpses had been buried--when the green fields of France had been dyed a crimson hue--when the stately

cathedrals of more than one ancient city had been demolished--when the cries of the widows and orphans and homeless had sounded around the world--what was left of the manhood of Christendom came limping home. From that day it was a different world. Bitterness was in the heart and unbelief in the soul. "If there was a God," they reasoned, "how could He allow such things?"

Underneath the exterior of culture they had beheld the savage instincts of man and they began to declare that Darwin was right. God was not our father--we came from the apes. They had seen the snarl of the gorilla on more than one human face. A world that had become deluged in blood and that had experienced such venomous hate could never have been created as recorded in the Book of Genesis by the will of an eternal and omnipotent God. Having thrown that out they started whirling around in the space of their own misconceptions. So things went from bad to worse!

It was bad enough when the young manhood and young womanhood of the years of the war began to harbor its thoughts and feelings. It was worse when the teachers carried it into the public schools. But it was tragic and blasphemous when it climbed the pulpit steps and started to speak through human lips to congregations who had supposedly come to worship God.

One of the troubles with humanity is that it is of times too lazy to do its own thinking. We ride in the automobile somebody else has made for us. Many a young man will tear along the country road at 75 miles an hour, knowing nothing whatever about the principle of internal combustion or the relationship of piston displacement to drive shaft and gear. Many a man will ride in the car of the creed of another's manufacture, without knowing anything about the machine in which he rides.

When the preachers mounted the pulpit steps of what was once a church but had now deteriorated into a social club or an academy of science, the people started assimilating their teaching because they had been used to allowing the preachers to do their thinking for them. This condition, as I have before stated, was not brought about overnight, but it was the result of years of premeditated attack upon the Church by the forces of infidelity and darkness.

The eternal Son of God Himself had looked down the corridors of the years and beheld this very day and hour, and asked the question:

"When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" The inferential answer, of course, is no. That does not mean, however, that there will be none at all, but it does mean that most of it will be gone. It does declare that what the Church once had it would have lost, to a large extent at any rate.

That statement is proved by the context as contained in Luke 18:1-8. The blessed Master in this Scripture was telling of the widow who importuned the judge over and over again until he avenged her of her adversary. The argument that left the lips of the Man of Galilee was that if an earthly judge would do that, merely

because a woman kept coming again and again with her petition to him, would not our heavenly Father avenge that little company who would be true to Him in those days of lack of faith and spiritual declension that would precede the second coming of Jesus?

Thank God, there will be some faith left! Thank God for the great fact that there will be a spiritual ecclesia preceding the second coming of Jesus, just as there was a called-out company immediately following the first physical presence of our dear Lord on the earth.

Thus it was the deluge came. Thus we see reason enthroned in our schools and colleges to the overthrow of faith. Thus it is I feel led by the Spirit to charge the modernistic preacher of our day with high treason to the King of glory and with spiritual assassination of tens of thousands of our people.

Thus it is that the devil laughs at a world that has lost its faith in the Church--and jeers at a Church that has lost its faith in the living God--and beckons them both to his fiery and eternal domain. Thus it is that the Sunday theaters are crowded and the preachers wring their hands and cry, "What shall we do?" as they gaze at their empty pews. Thus it is that the automobile siren has drowned out the pealing of the church bell and the highways are full and the house of God is practically empty.

Thus it is that the angels have hid their faces with their wings as they have beheld the church rolling down the mountainside of time from the peaks of Philadelphia until, bruised and battered and bleeding, it has found itself in the dark, dismal valley of Laodicea.

But there is another side of this story: Thank God for that! There are still some preachers left who believe that Jesus was born of a virgin--and I am one of them. There are still some ministers left who declare that salvation is through the shed blood of Jesus on Calvary's cross--and I am one of that number.

There are still some people left who are willing to be called fools and imbeciles and nitwits, because they believe that Daniel was put into a lion's den and that Jonah was swallowed by a great fish. I am one of that number. There are still some heralds of gospel truth that have beheld the light through the darkest night and are bold enough to proclaim the breaking of millennial day. I belong to that holy company.

That is why I am writing this book. That is why I pray that it will fall into the hands of boys and girls, of high school students, of young men and women, of old men and old women, who are nearing the sunset of their lives--and that it will be a help and an inspiration for them to cling to the faith of their fathers.

Every cloud has a silver lining and there is a garment of light hidden away behind the dark shadows of our day.

James Russell Lowell, in his poem, "The Present Crisis," declares:

*"Ceaseless seems the great avenger,
History's pages but record,
One death struggle in the darkness
Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne--
Yet that scaffold sways the future,
and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above his own."*

2. The Meaning of Faith

For centuries men have been trying to define faith. Dictionaries and encyclopedias have given us their definitions, but in every one of them there is something lacking. That something is the presence of the Holy Spirit, without whose illuminative power no man can understand the meaning of faith.

In Hebrews 11:1 the Bible defines it in a two-fold way. It declares that it is “the substance of things hoped for” and “the evidence of things not seen.”

These were the definitions of a man who had been closeted with God for three years somewhere in the Arabian wilderness, and who for the past 30 years had been led by the Spirit into the deeper revelations of Christian experience and life.

No wonder that the unregenerate man does not understand these Pauline statements. It is not at all strange that the majority of people are unable to drop the plumb line of their thinking to the profound depths of these great truths. The fact of the matter is that faith covers such a tremendous territory and operates in so many ways that it is almost impossible to define it in twentieth-century language. But let us pray that the Holy Spirit will illuminate our hearts and minds and reveal to us by His power those things that could never be apprehended or understood because of our human limitations.

First of all, faith is a persuasion of the mind resting upon evidence. God never asks us to believe anything unless He furnishes a basis for that belief. God never would ask us to believe a lie. So to be sure we do not believe a lie He gives us the truth. He tells us in what to place our faith. “Come let us reason together, saith the Lord” is a truth that can be found on every page of the Bible. Faith must have a foundation upon which to rest. In the very nature of things there must be some cause for its operation and some premise upon which it can manifest itself.

A great many people have never understood the difference between presumption and faith. Presumption is belief without evidence and faith is belief in action with it.

Let me illustrate what I mean. Some years ago when I was in a certain Canadian city a scoffer approached me when I was spending a quiet day at the beach. I had been preaching “faith” to thousands of people in a great arena. In spite of the fact that many miracles of healing were wrought by the power of God, there were numbers who were so blinded by the god of this world that they could not see the thing that was happening before their eyes. This man was one of them.

Approaching me as I was reclining on the beach he said, with a sarcastic sneer in his voice, “Oh, you man of faith, why don't you walk out on the water?”

If you walk out on the water I will believe--I'll stand up tonight before your audience and confess I have been wrong, and I'll give up my job and start

preaching.”

What would have happened if I had been foolish enough to have taken that man at his word and attempted to have walked on the sea? To have done so would have been presumption. You say that I might have had faith in God and that He would have borne me up. I do not believe it.

There is a great deal of difference between testing God and trusting Him. I would sink, and what is more, I would deserve to sink. There was no promise of God--no scriptural foundation, nothing in Heaven or in earth that would authorize me to attempt so foolhardy a thing.

Yet Peter walked on the sea and the waves held him up. He based his faith on the call of Jesus. In other words, he was persuaded in his mind--he believed--because the Lord told him to do it. The statement of Jesus--the invitation of the Christ--was the foundation upon which Peter's faith was built. The difference between Peter and myself regarding the challenge of the man to my walking on the sea and Peter's actual doing the same, was that he had some foundation for his faith and I had absolutely none.

There is nothing more sure--there is nothing in Heaven or in earth any more reliable than the multitudinous promises contained in the Word of the Lord.

“How firm a foundation, Ye saints of the Lord, Is laid for your faith In His excellent Word!”

What God has said, He means. Back of every one of the promises of the Bible is that eternal omnipotence that created every material thing that exists in all the universe. The God who made the things that are out of nothing, and who brought cosmos out of chaos, is the author of His promises and the omnipotence behind every one of them.

The Scripture teaches us that the man who comes to God with his supplications must first believe that He is. That means that he must believe that there is a God--eternal--omnipotent--omnipresent. The man who denies Him cannot possibly have faith in Him. The man who does not believe in Him cannot possibly have the superstructure of faith in his life, for God alone is the author of faith. You cannot rest upon nothing. Only God Himself would have the power of accomplishing that. Jesus, we know, is the author and finisher of our faith. The Bible rings with the clarion call, “Have faith in God--have faith in Christ,” thereby signifying that God Himself should be the foundation and the basis for all of our faith. There can be no faith in God without God Himself. Without God Himself faith would be presumption.

Faith always proves itself. It is a leap into the dark, but it lands you in the light. It is a journey into the unseen, but it leads to the heavenly vision. It may be sometimes mysterious in its processes, but it always proves itself in its ultimates. It cannot operate without accomplishment. To continue to exercise faith without

some degree of manifestation of its operation means there is something wrong somewhere, and we must find out both how and why.

3. The Walls of Jericho

Long and hard had been the years that had elapsed since the Children of Israel halted at Kadesh-Barnea. Forty summers had come and gone and forty winters had they endured since last they were at the portals of the Promised Land. Out on the vast Arabian desert the bones of thousands of them bleached beneath the burning sun, for only the small boys of 40 years ago were men now at the doorway to the land of promise.

They were about to engage in a battle. They had lost one 40 years before. They had fought no army--there had been no attack of infantry; there had been no battalion of soldiers arrayed against them on the hillside--but they had been defeated just the same. Disorganized, whipped, and discouraged, they had turned their backs upon the land that they might have possessed and had lost themselves in the barren vastnesses of the wilderness.

Only two men who were grown at the time of that defeat were now standing before the gates of Jericho. Those two men--Joshua and Caleb--had been warriors of faith. They were here now because God had not forgotten the hoisting of the banner of faith as it fluttered in the breeze of unbelief, waving defiance against all the forces of darkness.

What was the battle that they had lost? It was not fought upon the battlefield of Kadesh-Barnea. It was not waged in the vales of Eshcol. The battle that they lost was fought on the battlefield of their hearts. Reason had overthrown faith, and had defeated the purpose of God. If they had only known it faith would have been the victory. Faith is the victory now, even as it was then.

Faith cried, "Those men are as grasshoppers before us"; but reason shouted, "They are giants and they will overwhelm us." Faith opened its ear to the voice of an eternal Father as He called upon His children to go forward and to trust Him. Reason listened to the growling and sneering of the sons of Anak while the fogs of unbelief hid their vision of God. Faith remembered the pillar of cloud and had not forgotten a pillar of fire that had guarded and guided them on their pilgrim way. But reason had seen the fire in the eyes of the giants of the walled cities and had forgotten the fire that came from the throne of Heaven. Faith had discerned the form of God as He wrapped the cloud around Him for a garment, but reason had looked so long at the walls of the fortified cities; in its mind the cloud was so big it blotted out all vision of Heaven.

So the years had come and gone. I wonder how many times Moses had told them, as they wandered through the wilderness, that faith was the only victory. I wonder on how many different occasions he had declared that only in the strength of a God who could deliver could they ever conquer. Perhaps this generation that had been born during the pilgrimage would believe more than had their fathers in the integrity of the divine word and the omnipotent power

that was behind it. The Bible account does not tell us, but if it is true that man is but a composite of his yesterdays, then something must have happened to the new soldiers who found themselves at the doorway of the Promised Land, or was it, perhaps, that man's extremity was at last to prove God's opportunity?

Was it that having exhausted every other resource and having found nothing but blind ends to every trail, they had turned back to the God of their emancipation? Forty years wandering in the wilderness must have incapacitated them as soldiers. Men do not walk over the burning sands without feeling the burning in their feet.

Late one night Joshua, the general, left the camp. Two miles away he could see in the pale moonlight the grim citadel of Jericho, with its walls standing like sentinels, crying, "They shall not pass." His heart must have been filled with anxiety and with bewilderment.

During the past 40 years the problem had not changed one bit. The traveling through the wilderness had not removed the difficulty. If anything, it might have increased it. Of what was he thinking when in the loneliness of that hour he surveyed the distant walls of Jericho? The city was to be taken. There could be no doubt about that. The city must be taken. Of that thing he was certain and sure.

Suddenly, perhaps from beneath the shadows of a nearby palm grove, there appeared by his side a man who had a drawn sword in his hand. Quick as a flash of lightning the challenge fell from Joshua's lips. Marvelous and wonderful indeed is it to know that obedience will bring courage, and walking in the light will banish fear.

Beautiful and yet firm were the words of the enigmatic stranger, "Nay, but as captain of the Lord's host am I come." The heart of Joshua bounded within him. Here indeed was the angel of the covenant. Here was the positive proof that God had not forsaken his people. Faith was the victory that was to storm the walls of Jericho, and unfurl the flag of Israel from the topmost peaks of the citadel.

Then the two had a conference. The captain of the host of the Lord outlined the plans for the taking of the city. The battle was to be the Lord's, and the children of Israel were to walk in the light of faith and leave the results with God. What strange military tactics these two planned together! The like of that plan had never been known in human history, and the method of taking the city was one that every general in the world except Joshua would have laughed to scorn. There was to be no fighting--just walking in obedience.

There could have been no walking in obedience if there had been no God in whom Joshua could have placed his faith. What a test it must have been for Joshua in this particular case. "Faith is the victory," rang the bells in Joshua's heart. "Faith is the victory," sang the choirs of Heaven, and the strains must have floated down to the ears of the lonely man who stood gazing at the distant walls

on that moonlit night.

The walls were actually up around old Jericho, but they were down in the spiritual vision of Joshua. Faith was even then the substance of things hoped for. Back he went to camp. "We have won the victory," declared Joshua. "Are the walls down?" answered the soldier. "Have the inhabitants of the city fled?"

"No, they are still there, but nevertheless the Lord has delivered the city into our hands."

4. How Faith Works

Then he proceeded to unfold the plans of God before a people who should have trusted in the same Lord 40 years before. Spiritual victories are generally won by the operation of the principles of faith that, in the minds of scientific men, are absolutely and thoroughly inadequate.

Reason might have started in again and said, "Listen to me, Joshua, how absolutely ridiculous and unutterably foolish for you to believe that those walls will fall down because you carry a box with you and march around the city. Is it not absurd to believe that blowing trumpets and shouting at the top of your lungs will do anything more than use up all your wind, and can have no effect whatever on those impregnable barriers of stone?"

But faith leaped to the fray in Joshua's heart. He might have replied, "Prate not to me of the reasons of any finite conceptions. The God of all eternity and infinity has spoken. With Him I shall march around the city. I can march and He can push the walls down."

So reason gave way before the affirmations of faith and seven days went swiftly by. Hardly had the shout left the throats of the victorious throng before the angels in Heaven beheld another cloud. It was a cloud of dust rising from the debris of the falling masonry; and Joshua knew that somewhere hidden in that cloud was the arm of the Eternal God, whose name was Jehovah-Nissi.

Have you ever stood before the Jericho of your life? Has the impossible ever loomed up before you with its impregnable walls? Have you ever been face to face with difficulties that in the natural were insurmountable and reason cried, "You might as well capitulate--you might as well give up--there is no use fighting against the inevitable." You might have allowed reason to pass judgment upon you. Have you wandered in the wilderness seeking in vain for the things that you have lost?

There will never be a victory over something else tomorrow until you have first conquered the thing that has defeated you today. God will never let you take a walled city in Arabia after you have been defeated in Canaan. One must go back first to that Canaan issue and settle that question first.

Do not say it cannot be done. Do not be defeated in your soul by the thing that seems to be. All things are possible to the man who believes. Belief begets obedience, and obedience builds the road down which faith marches with glorious triumph. Obedience works, but faith is the inspiration that vitalizes it.

So it is we face our Jerichos. In the loneliness of our own souls we stand in fearful contemplation gazing at what seems to be the impossible. In the calm of a moonlit night beneath the shadow of a wall of stone, does the Son of God appear to you? Perhaps as you turn over the pages of His Word in the quiet of your own

room there falls upon your burdened soul a benediction like rain upon the thirsty land. Did you get a vision of the captain of the host of the Lord? Is He for you or against you? What a question! He is always, always, always for you. Have you courage? Have you strength? Have you faith? He is always and eternally working for your good.

As you feel the pressure of His hand you notice that there is a nail print in it. You listen to the cadency of His voice vibrate with understanding and yet pulsate with power. "Let us plan this thing together," He says. "You cannot do this thing alone. You cannot accomplish this purpose by yourself. We together will take Jericho." You know it is there--this Jericho of sin--this city of unbelief, this city of seemingly impregnable fortresses, this impediment to your Christian progression and your growth in grace. So it is that you talk with God.

No sooner has the voice of the Savior ceased speaking to the spiritual ear than reason laughs and says, "Isn't it absurd? Isn't it foolish? How can these things be?" But you raise the bugle to your lips and the regiments of joy and of peace and of glory start marching across the fields of your soul. You have not won the victory, and yet you have. The problem is not solved and yet you are shouting because you know it will be. The difficulty has not been removed and yet you are so happy that you can jump for joy. "Faith is the victory," ring the bells in your heart as they did in Joshua's. "Faith wins the victory," sing the choirs of Heaven to you as they sang to Him. The organ peals, "Onward, Christian Soldiers," and the general of faith strides at the head of the marching battalions of the soul.

You might not believe in ministering angels, but I do. You might not believe that they come to the man of faith to dispel all the difficulties of doubt, fear, unbelief, but I do. So it is that you plan it together. You and Jesus--Jesus and you. Your way has become His way. Your plan has become His plan. His voice has inspired you to obedience and you are just as sure that the walls will fall on your march on the first day as you are that they have fallen when the sun sinks on the western hills at the close of the seventh day.

There is not much difference between the shouts of anticipation before they crumble and the shout of victory after they are down. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." So you march together, you and Jesus--Jesus and you--and you walk by His side, even though He is invisible, along what might be the rocky paths of implicit obedience--then one day it happens. The impossible has been accomplished. The difficulty has been overcome. The impediments have been overcome. The impediments have been moved out of the way. The natural has bowed before the supernatural. The finite has acknowledged Him as the Lord.

The walls of your Jericho have fallen and crumbled, not merely because you shouted--not merely because you walked around--an eternal God had something to do with it. In your heart you knew that the cloud of dust that the eyes of the people of the world could see was only a cloak that was wrapped around the

omnipotent arm of the Lord. So like Job of old you sat on the front porch of your spiritual possessions richer than you ever were before in all of your life and you said, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

So it was that the walls of Jericho fell then; and by faith today the towering heights that loom up between us and the city not made with hands, crumble to the ground and prove an obstacle against us no more.

5. The Steps of the Ladder

Faith must begin by the acknowledgment of our own weakness and inability. In the realms of human attainment, there might be some virtue in the teaching of the philosophers that faith in one's own self and in one's own ability is an asset. In the realm of spiritual life it is a distinct and definite liability.

Man being a finite being cannot reach out of the boundaries of infinity and appropriate the things that belong to infinity. The thing that he needs for the development of his soul, however, are not the things that belong to this world. He is absolutely powerless in the grip of sin. To deny the fact of sin or to attempt to repudiate its effect, even though you admit its evidence, is absurd. If a man believes that he can work his way into Heaven, he will never feel his need of a Savior. If he never feels his need of a Savior, how can he have faith in One who came to save him?

Faith begins where sight ends. If you can imagine for one moment that you can take your Jericho without any help from the Lord he will let you try it, but let me assure you, you will try in vain. You might walk around it for seven years, or an eternity for that matter, and all you would do would be to strengthen the foundation.

When self-reliance dies, faith begins to be born. When you come to the end of yourself you arrive at the beginning of God in your life. The apostle Paul declared that he could do all things, but he went on to say that he could only do them through Christ. That is why he was willing to glory in his infirmities--because when he had them the power of Christ rested upon him. For this reason he declared he was the strongest when he was the weakest. This truth is an eternal paradox in the hands of faith.

If your own indomitable will has prevented you from bending the knee then ask God for grace and strength to bring it to obedience. If the devil of pride has been singing its praises in your open ear then banish him forever. Just simply throw up your hands and quit. Come yourself as a miserable, wretched sinner in need of God's power in your life, and ask God to let you see to the end of yourself!

Faith always begins by acknowledging that you cannot do it. It is always preceded by a deep feeling that the thing desired is impossible in itself. As Joshua stood that night before the walls of Jericho he might have said in his heart, "I cannot, I cannot do it"--and then the captain of the Lord's host stood by his side and whispered, "No, Joshua, you cannot do it, but we can." Such a day in your life will be the birthday of faith. How can you be afraid when your Father is so near?

Then faith must of necessity call upon God. Do not wait for God to call upon you, but you call upon God. The reason that many people never have God in

their homes is because they have never invited Him. Before He will confess you you must confess Him. Faith needs God and therefore it calls upon Him.

How foolish we are, poor little creatures of time, to try to get along with our own limitations when there are the immeasurable resources of Heaven at our disposal. Why try to walk the paths of the unchartered future when One is willing to walk by our side who has been every step of the way before?

How my heart bleeds in pity and in sympathy for the young man or the young woman into whose spiritual veins has been injected the venomous poison of unbelief while attending some of our modern educational institutions. Lead your professors to the lawn outside the school and ask them to grow one little tiny blade of grass. Ask them to make a synthetic seed that will sprout and bring forth a harvest. Ask them to make a leaf that will cast away the dress of green it has worn all summer and array itself in the deepest tones of golden brown as it puts on its autumnal clothes. Ask them to fashion one little snowflake or to persuade some hen to hatch her eggs in 14 days instead of 21.

Oh, the corruption of vanity--oh, the absurdity of intellectual pride! The priest who took me through St. Peter's, architecturally the greatest cathedral in the world, swept his arm toward the dome and said, "This is the creation of Michelangelo." But I walked outside, away from the unchallenged magnificence of what I had seen and looked up into the starry heavens. I was on the pavements of Vatican City in faraway Rome. I lost sight of the majesty of St. Peter's and forgot to think about the vaunted temporal power of the Pope as I looked up into the canopy of the skies and said, "This is the creation of my Lord." Yonder blazed hundreds of millions of suns. Stars had been thrown across the immeasurable spaces of the sky like seeds that had been scattered by the hand of the farmer in his field. Worlds were so big and planets were so huge that this little revolving earth fades into insignificance in comparison. Yet that great, vast, immeasurable, multitudinous constellations of stars and planets with moons and suns without number are all moving, moving, moving along the lanes of their appointed and predestined travel.

More than one brain has broken in trying to comprehend it. The next time your pompous professor sticks out his puny chest and tells you that those stars just whirled themselves into position and prates about the anthropoid hypothesis, just lead him outside, ask him to call together the combined intellects of the intelligentsia of the world, and ask them to grow one little blade of grass. Only God can make a tree. Your professor can make a statement--but only God can make a rosebud.

Then faith must get on its knees and cry out to God. Faith must walk down the vales of self-abasement and humiliation in order that it might climb the mountain of divine revelation that is on the other side. Before you can become strong you have to become weak. Before you can be filled you have to be empty. When you have become strong you will rejoice in your weakness. After you have become filled you will thank God for your emptiness. That, I say again, is why Paul

rejoiced in his infirmities.

In the third place, faith discovers what God's plan is and then does it. How multitudinous have been the plans of men. They sit today in the crumbling castle of their philosophic and scientific theories witnessing what they themselves admit to be the cataclysmic collapse of civilization.

We have had in recent years an epidemic of cultists, of philosophers, of psychologists, of psycho-analysts--until the house they built blew up as they blatantly contradicted one another. In the realm of finance and monetary systems the past years have treated us to the fantastic sight of a succession of experiments that have resulted in nothing at all. At last one of the greatest economists has declared, "Nobody knows anything about money." That was the end of that!

Even in the realm of spiritual things the church officials got to dismantling the machinery of the gospel ship that had carried their fathers and mothers safely to the haven of rest. They started critically analyzing the machinery, and, not being able to understand it, they threw it overboard and began clamoring for a system and method that was amenable to reason, and that could be measured by the calipers of science. So overboard went the virgin birth, and after that they threw away the literal resurrection. They cleaned out salvation through the blood, and one by one the miracles fell with a splash into the modernistic sea. They demoted Jesus from captain to teacher, and some of them even told Paul that they did not want to hear from him anymore, as some of his doctrines were very unsound and unsafe. So the good Lord could do nothing else but leave them to their own foolish destruction while He called the faithful around him and promised them a safe journey into the harbor of rest, where the angels wait to sing their welcome home by the silver strand of Glory.

Yes, there have been many ways--many, many systems--but God's way is the best way, after all. The plan of salvation has never been improved upon. The paths of time are strewn with the wreckage of man's attempted achievements and they ought to be warnings to the young generation of this day to cling to the faith of their fathers.

Let me repeat that faith finds out the Divine plan and then lives and acts and works accordingly. God's way is better than your way unless you make your way His. We have tried the broken cisterns--and lo, their waters have failed. Place your poor torn hand in the nail-pierced hand of a Savior and let Him lead you out of the vales of bewilderments into the light of the sunshine of eternal realities and truth. He loves you enough to do it if you will let Him.

The next step in the development of our appropriating, acting faith is to get hold of a promise. I have before stated that in order for faith to be exercised at all it must be established upon some sure foundation. You could not have faith in a bridge to take you across a chasm unless the bridge was there. When you have faith in God--if you will analyze that faith--you will discover that it is based

upon something that God has said. The inheritances of the children of the Lord are the wonderful and marvelous promises of the Bible.

Whatever your condition, my friend--whatever your sorrow, whatever your trouble, whatever your heartache--there is a promise in the Word of God to meet it. If you are clothed with the garment of mourning God has promised to give you the robes of praise. If you are traveling through the darkness of the night of misunderstanding, God has promised that He will lead you to the mountain peaks of glory where eternal sunlight gleams. If you are bewildered in the vales of ignorance and misunderstanding and you need wisdom, God has said in His Word that you can come to Him and He will impart it.

If all of the promises were taken out of the Bible--if there was nothing there but a record of the ministry of Jesus and the acts of the apostles--how dismal and dark would be the path our feet would tread. Our religious experience would only consist of the contemplation of the historic Christ. We read that Jesus walked with the disciples. That is history. But when Jesus says, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," that means experience. Taking hold of that promise, faith says, "Lord, I believe--you are near me--you are by my side"--and thousands of us can testify that that is literally true. When we read that Jesus walked the Emmaus Road and the hearts of the two disciples burned within them as He talked to them by the way, that is history. But your town has an Emmaus Road, and your hearts have burned within you as He talked with you by the way. That is experience brought by the alchemy of the power of faith.

Some years ago I sat in the home of a young Christian. That is, she was young in Christian experience, but not in years. Only three weeks before she had given her heart to Jesus and had begun to walk the pilgrim pathway that leads to the land of endless day. I have met very few people in my life who were so ignorant of the Bible and of the rudiments of Christianity as was that dear woman. She was indeed a babe in Christ.

She had the misfortune to be the mother of a daughter who was suffering from an incurable disease. The girl had been a great trial and burden to her through life, but with a mother's tender, loving care she had done her best for her ailing child. Only a day before I visited the home her husband had been instantly killed, and her nephew, who was visiting them at the time, severely injured in an automobile accident.

So it was I sat in that home that rainy night. The poor woman sat moaning and wringing her hands and I was doing my best to comfort her. She seemed not to be listening to what I said, but was simply lost in her hopelessness and despair. When I told her of the great Burden Bearer, she mournfully shook her head. I felt led by the Spirit to read from the Word and so I turned to that wonderful Psalm, "He that dwelleth in the secret place." As I read on, emphasizing the words I thought she ought to hear, she suddenly stopped me. A strange look came into her eyes, and she exclaimed, "Does it really say that?"

Turning to the New Testament I read one after another the promises of Jesus. Her eyes opened wider and wider until at last she exclaimed, "To whom did Jesus make that promise?" I reached forward, grasped her hand and looked into her eyes and said, "To you." She leaned back in the chair and repeated over and over again, "That promise--to me; that promise--to me." As the realization dawned upon her faith began to grow as she exclaimed, "Well, if Jesus said He would do that I am-going to ask-him-to-do-it-for me.

Into that home of sorrow came the comforting Nazarene! Into a situation where no earthly circumstance could bring joy by any stretch of the imagination there came a beautiful and an abiding peace. She told me that after the funeral she could not weep except tears of joy. She said, "Is it not strange that joy because my husband found Jesus has exceeded my sorrow in losing him?" I told her it was strange for the people of the world, but it is not strange for the people of God. It is what they ought to expect.

Oh faith, beautiful faith, born of the love of a Father's heart, lift us above the vales of sorrow, and even here wipe the tears from every eye. Glorious faith--wonderful faith--that reaches into the treasury of the divine Word and grips with its fingers some jewel of a promise and presses it against a broken heart until the healing waters flow. Faith--sweet and glorious faith--that takes from our ears the limitations of sound and time--and bids us listen to the music that comes from beside the glassy sea or, perchance, that music that is sweeter still--the voice of our glorified Lord.

6. The Key to the Jewel Box

Why walk in spiritual poverty when you have the wealth that is revealed by the promises divine? Why allow a devil to browbeat you and to rob you of your inheritance when you can hold aloft the inspired Word and declare in the face of all the forces of hell, "Thus saith the Lord"?

This promise is mine. You are spiritual millionaires if you only knew it. The promises are yours--the Bible is yours--and Jesus, bless His name, is yours too.

It is not enough to just rock back and forth in your sorrow in the quiet of your own room and have a kind of abstract faith that the Lord might help you. God demands activity from His children. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," saith the Lord. The reason that he does not flee is because you do not resist him. If you resist him he will go. He may not want to depart, but God will make him go.

You see, God cannot lie--He must abide by His own word. So it is that faith must emerge from a passive and apathetic state into the realm of activity. Get hold of a promise. Hold it up before God. Tell God it is yours. Tell Him you believe it. Tell Him you are going to hold Him to his Word; then act your faith. Walk the next minute and the next day not on how you feel, not influenced by environment, or conquered by circumstances--but walk victoriously with the promises of God beneath your feet. God has to answer. God has to do the thing He has promised to do.

In the case of Joshua, as he stood before the walls of Jericho the captain of the host of the Lord had said, "I will deliver Jericho into thy hands." That was all that Joshua needed. If the captain of the host of the Lord had told him to walk on his hands around Jericho he would have done that. Do not believe for one moment that Joshua thought in his heart that the march of the soldiers and the priests would tear down the walls of Jericho. The march was nothing more than a sign that he believed God. That is why God had him march. Joshua knew who pushed down those walls, and I know who will push down the walls for you.

But have you given the Lord a sign that you believe Him? Have you begun to act your faith? Have you received the assurance of the falling of the walls, even though God has not yet pushed them over? Anybody can believe that the walls are down, after they have fallen. It was within the power of God to have stood by the side of Joshua as he gazed in the distance on that moonlit night and to have said, "Look, Joshua." Then while God pointed His divine finger at the city the walls could have crashed. It would have been just as easy for God to have done it then as for Him to accomplish the same thing seven days later.

Why did he make Joshua wait? The answer is perfectly obvious, but it is of paramount and of tremendous importance. It was because it is part of the

economy of God for man to cooperate with the divine in the exercising of faith so that God's power might be manifest. If God gave us everything we needed just when we needed it we would deteriorate into spiritual mechanisms. We would become living machines and lose our identity as free moral agents.

Do you not see that it is the man who believes God who gets things from Him? Can you not understand that it is the man who believes God that really honors the Lord by so doing?

George Muller became an apostle of faith because he had the courage to believe God. There can be another George Muller in the days in which we live.

What is your need--what is your problem--what is your question? Unlock the jewel box--unfold the covers of the treasury--there is a promise that is backed by all the eternal resources of Heaven and by all the power of an infinite God. Yes, these things are true, but that promise is backed by something more than that--the Lord God Himself. That is enough for me. Pull that priceless treasure out of its setting and hold it toward the riven skies.

Even though your heart be breaking let your voice ring out, "It is your promise, Lord." Even as you pray, the oil of Heaven will be poured over your wounded heart. There may be, or there may not be, a divine manifestation of the answer--but faith will sing the victory and rejoice in the power of His might. Get that promise--hold it--hold it fast, hold it tight--do not let it go, and march around the walls of your Jericho, with a bugle in one hand and a pitcher in the other. Fill the trumpet with the notes of praise and God will fill the pitcher with the joy of the Holy Ghost. Then you can stand back and watch the Lord push the walls down.

The next step is to remember that in the development of God's economy regarding faith God does not always work in the same way. Let us assume for a moment that He did. Let us assume that God always answers prayer and manifests Himself through His promises in the same amount of time and in exactly the same way on every occasion. Faith would soon die in the human heart, for under such conditions the matter of the fulfillment of the promise would be simply a matter of routine.

God may send the answer before you are through asking today; and tomorrow, for some purpose known to Himself, He may make you wait. But faith on the morrow looks back at the victory of yesterday and says, "Praise the Lord!" It does not agonize as it contemplates the future, but it rests with a sublime peace while waiting for the fulfillment of the divine Word.

If it worried it would not be faith. If it started to become overly anxious faith would strangle itself and soon die in the human breast. Faith can be active when it is at rest--and it can be the strongest when it wears a crown of peace. When the agonizing prayer of intercession turns to the psalm of praise, it is faith that sits at the keyboard and brings melodies from the organ of the heart.

Not very long ago I stood by the ruins of ancient Jericho. Workmen had been busy removing the rubbish and the debris and they had succeeded in uncovering some of the old houses that had been buried during the centuries that have marched by. Just across the road from where I was standing was the spring of water that is known to this day as the Fountain of Elisha. It is recorded in Second Kings 2 that a man of the city of Jericho told Elisha, a man of God, that the water was no good and the ground was barren. The prophet, undoubtedly inspired by the Spirit, instructed them to bring him a new cruse and to put salt in the vessel. When he had done so, Elisha took the vessel of salt from their hands and, walking to the water, emptied the contents of that vessel into it and exclaimed, "Thus said the Lord, I have healed these waters. There shall not be from thence any more death or barren land."

Nearly three thousand years have passed since the day when Elisha obeyed the word of the Lord, but those waters are still sweet. That spring pours out a great volume of clear, cool, sparkling water without a single trace of alkali in it. Every other spring in that vicinity is unfit to drink and the alkali with which they are filled stains the nearby ground a chalky white. But this spring--Elisha's spring--pours out a beautiful and steady stream of sparkling water. It irrigates the countryside, and every orange and lemon tree that is irrigated by its flow speaks to me of the promise of God. When our God says "forever," He means just that. He is the same God who has promised you.

So it was I gazed at the ruins of Jericho as I stood just across the road from the bubbling water of a beautiful spring. Somebody turned to me and said, "I wonder if those are the very stones that fell down when Joshua marched around the city?" In reply I exclaimed, "I do not know whether they are or not; but one thing I do know--we can still cry as they cried then, Jehovah-Nissi--the Lord our banner. It is just as true today as it was then. Our little party walked across the road and we drank of the waters of Elisha's fountain. With the moisture still on my lips I turned to my friends and said, "God does not forget."

From 895 B.C. to 1936 A.D. is a long time--but the waters are still sweet.

Dear children of God, is not therein a lesson that will strengthen your faith?

"Thus saith the Lord" is just as true in 1936 A.D. as it was in 895 B.C. The only difference is that in those days they poured salt, but in these days He pours grace.

7. What Is Faith?

We now come to a very important part of our study. We pray for the Spirit to enlighten us, as we carefully and prayerfully answer the question, “What is faith?” What does it mean?

I stated earlier in this book that the best definition of faith is to be found in the Book that tells us all we know about it. It is to be found on the pages of that volume that records the marvelous exploits of faith operating in the hearts of godly men in days gone by. Hebrews 11:1 declares, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” In the Revised Version we read, “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, [the proving] of things not seen.

In every one of these different translations that, of course, mean fundamentally the same thing, there is a direct statement that faith is established upon and founded upon evidence. Even though the things are not seen they must be there, for if they were not there the Bible would not call them “things.” It puts a certain tangibility upon the effect of the operation of faith. Were there to be no evidence there could not be the exercise of faith, but before faith can operate it must of necessity have some hope--some purpose--that requires its operation.

Faith is the assent or persuasion of the mind to the truth of God's revealed will. Faith is the persuasion of the heart to the integrity of the divine Word. Faith is a combination of the belief of the heart and the reasoning of the spiritual mind based upon divine assertions and promises that we believe to be immutable, omnipotent, and infallible. Faith is not naturally reasonable, because being of divine origin it reaches beyond the boundaries of reason into the realms of the supernatural. It is not foolish, except to the man who has no spiritual light, because it is energized and vitalized by the Spirit of God, who will take us beyond the realms of the natural into contact with the supernatural powers that belong to God Himself. For this cause what is unreasonable to the natural man becomes reasonable to the man who is filled with the Spirit.

If all things were self-evident, what need would there be for the exercising of faith? If faith did not take us beyond the boundaries of the things that could be understood by the mind of man without God, there would be no need for us to desire to possess it in the sense that the Bible teaches it. For then, the results could be obtained by the operation of mental faculties alone. That is, if faith never operated in the realm of the supernatural there would be no need for us to have faith in God, because we could get everything we wanted without Him.

But faith not only operates within the boundaries of the things we understand and what our minds can apprehend--but faith operates in the realm of the supernatural. It does the impossible. It reaches far beyond the limits of human attainment and operates outside the scope of mental ingenuity. That is why fools are sometimes wiser than men of education.

The reason that the apostle of old said he was willing to become a fool for Christ's sake was because faith, in his life, was operating in a realm that all the doctors of learning knew absolutely nothing about. They might know the age of the rocks--but he knew the Rock of Ages. They might attempt to look at the stars through a telescope, but the child of God by faith was in constant communion with the God who used them as a throne. Some men by years of study will reach out to a limited intellectual distance, while the child of God will give one jump in faith and land somewhere over on the other side of the wall. It brings the jewels of Heaven and gives them to the creatures of time.

Two men can look at a rainbow. One of them can give you a scientific thesis on the operation of the spectrum on the rain drops that have their prismatic values--while the child of God looks at the same rainbow and sees in it nothing but the promises of God blended in gorgeous colors wrapped around the shoulders of the storm.

Faith is a ladder up which we climb out of the world of things that seem to be into the realms of things as they really are. The transition might not be instantaneous, but the very fact that you climb the ladder proves that you have faith in the ladder to bear you and in the fact that there is something at the top. The top is the thing that is hoped for--every rung of the ladder is a promise of God--but it is faith that inspires to do the climbing.

The top of the ladder might be beyond the vision of the brainiest and the most keen-sighted man. It has to be--for if they could see it there would not be the need to exercise faith to believe it was there.

My Greek Testament declares that faith is "a conviction of things not seen."

What do we mean by this word conviction? In the larger and broader sense we mean a persuasion of the heart and mind--for both of them cooperate in the operation of faith. If the things that are not seen are at the top of the ladder and two men are sitting together on the ground at its foot, the man who starts to climb the ladder is persuaded that the thing he wants is at the top. The man who makes no attempt to climb does so because he refuses to believe what he cannot see. If you could see it and climb for it, it would not be faith. When you do not see it, and yet climb for it--that is faith. So faith is the conviction--the persuasion of heart and mind of things not seen.

But let me bring you again to our original statement that it must be based upon evidence. If a poor old tramp told you that there was a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow you would not believe it--because there would be no evidence. If a millionaire told you on his word of honor that there was a purse of gold awaiting you at his office you would immediately go after it. The act of going after it would be faith in operation following a persuasion of the mind that what he said was true.

Now then, when God says something--God, the eternal one; the Lord of

Creation; the one who held the oceans in the hollow of His hand; the One whose fingers fashioned the mountains and traced the course of the rivers down their sides; when God says something and backs it by His authority--then, I submit, you have a basis for your faith.

When that eternal One, clothed in glory and majesty and power--before whom devils tremble and flee--before whose majestic words of command even nature suspends its operation--when that God speaks, then I maintain you have a basis, an evidence for the operation of your faith.

When that wonderful Jesus--the Christ of Calvary who was clothed and filled with all the fullness of the Godhead and who bade the angry waves of Galilee be still--when that Jesus speaks and gives you a promise, then I maintain that you have a basis for your faith.

He promises the unattainable and we receive it. He promises the impossible and we get it. An unbelieving world may scoff, modernists may laugh me to scorn--the poor blinded eyes of the super-intelligentsia of this day and hour might not see the working of the Divine--but just the same, I maintain that faith can still remove mountains and that all things are possible to the man who believes.

“Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,

And looks to God alone;

Laughs at impossibilities

And cries it shall be done!’

There are two words in the original Old Testament language that are translated into “trust” and “faith.” One of them that is translated “believe,” “trust, and “faith,”~ means in the transitive, “to prop up, to stay, to support.” In the intransitive it means “to stay oneself.” The second word that is translated “trust” means “to throw yourself upon,” “to cast oneself upon.” Both of these meanings have their place in the development of the experience of faith. All faith is built upon one foundation and is fundamentally the same regarding its origin and system of operation.

With regard to these two translations the difference of meaning is very apparent although the operation of faith is just the same. When we say we believe God, we mean that we stay ourselves upon His Word. We believe what He says--in other words, we believe God. Again, when we say we believe in God it means that we cast ourselves upon God Himself.

In relationship to faith throughout the whole of the Word these two translations predominate, but remember that God is the objective of both types. In one case it is God Himself and in the other case it is His Word. But the Word without God would not be the Word. It would be robbed of its authority, so we are necessarily

led to the ultimate of all the operative faith-God Himself. Is it faith for the lifting of a burden? Who lifts it? God. To have faith in the burden to lift itself would bring no result, but to have faith in the God who can lift it and then to put faith in operation because He has promised to do it is another thing altogether. Can you not see why Jesus is called the author and the finisher of our faith? In other words He is the Alpha and the Omega of our faith. It begins with His promise and ends with the manifestation of His power.

How can a man have faith who believes not in the promise, and how could faith operate if there was not that mighty One who made the promise? That is why it is absolutely impossible for the man who is not walking close to God to exercise faith. The closer you walk, the more abundant faith. The man who travels down the highway of intellectual accomplishments knows nothing but himself and chooses naught but the fragmentary illusions of time. The man who walks in the Spirit contacts the realm of eternal power, for he communes with God Himself. Turn the pages of history over--read your Bibles and biographies of men of faith--and you will find in every instance that they have been men who have walked with God.

In the eleventh chapter of the Gospel of Mark and the twenty-second verse we have the statement of Jesus made to his disciples, "Have faith in God."

The marginal reading gives you the translation, "Have the faith of God"--that is the faith that God imparts. This statement very clearly signifies that faith is inseparable from God, and that He alone, through the ministry of the Son and the Holy Spirit, can impart it. The Scripture declares that it is a fruit of the Spirit and the gift of God. It logically and reasonably follows that faith being in God must of a natural consequence be of God.

But it was to man that Jesus was speaking. Did He ever ask him to do the impossible? Did He ever hold out to him an ideal that was unattainable? The answer is almost emphatic no. The modernist will respond with an aggressive yes and declare that the age of miracles is past, and that the day of the alchemy of faith's workings will break no more.

We see, then, that in order to have the faith of God, we are taught that we must exercise faith in God for the things that are promised us by God. We must contact God Himself. That brings us then to another important step in our study, namely: "How to get faith."

8. How to Get It

Oh, how much we need Him! Oh, how our hearts should cry out as we wander through the darkness of our unbelief, until lost in the dark glades of our fears we grasp at vain, imaginary things in our endeavor to get the light.

We have proved that faith is--that God is back of it--that God has an immeasurable supply of it--and it ought to be the purpose of every one of our hearts to possess it. We turn from reading in the Word the account of what faith as big as a grain of mustard seed will do, but we can search the world over and not find as much faith as that outside God Himself. He has it--we know that--but our problem is how to get it. I want to begin this chapter with the emphatic declaration that faith can do anything that God can do. "All things are possible to him that believes." There is no limitation to that promise. There are no boundaries to it.. it is as deep as the deepest depth and as high as the limitless canopy of space.

In the first place, let me remind you that faith is a gift. That means that it cannot be earned. That means that it does not come merely as a reward for service or as the result of your own struggle and endeavor. We hear a great deal about appropriating faith. Faith can appropriate, but you cannot appropriate faith. Let me remind you once again--the Bible declares it is a gift. But you tell me it is also a fruit, and if it is a fruit, then you say that you can grow it. Not so, my friend. It is not a fruit of your growing. It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. You cannot grow the fruit of the Spirit without the Spirit. If you could, then it would not be the fruit of the Holy Spirit but the fruit of your own endeavor--the fruit of your growing. Try as man will, he cannot separate the possession of faith from the possession of God Himself.

In Romans 12:3 the apostle Paul deals very clearly and forcibly with a man who is carried away with spiritual exaltation because of his accomplishments, for he says, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

Then, again, Paul declares in the First Corinthians 2:5, "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." In other words, he was declaring that no matter what miracle was wrought--no matter what supernatural manifestation of power was accomplished--he answered as soon as possible because he did not want the people to believe for one moment that it was his work, but he wanted them to know that it was the work of God.

The steps are very clear:

* Faith can move mountains--work miracles--and bring to pass all of those results that are seen through the promises of the Word.

* It is only God Himself who can do this.

* If only God can do it, then, of course, we need God.

* Only to the man who walks with God will He impart and give the faith to bring these things to pass.

Beloved, therein lies the secret of the attainment of faith. Get close to God. Get very close to God. Withdraw yourself from the noise and hubbub and clamor of a world of unbelief and sin--get alone with God. Close your ears to the whispers of evil men and plead the blood of Jesus as a barrier against the suggestions of the devil--get alone with God. Pray for the blood to cleanse from sin, and for the heart to be made clean and pure--get alone with God.

The Scripture tells us that the Word of the Lord is a power that sanctifies. With all my heart I cry unto you, "Faith cometh--faith cometh," but how does it come? "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

How wonderful the contemplation of this truth! How glorious and marvelous this assertion of the divine heart! Are you in the dark? His Word is a light unto your feet and a lamp unto your pathway. Are you sick and suffering? He sent forth His Word and healed them. Are you hungry and crying out for that which satisfies? Men do not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Are you lost, groping in the darkness and slipping down the steps of time toward eternity's night? He alone has the Word of eternal life.

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. The miracle of the incarnation got hold of God's love, His heart throb, His compassion, His tenderness and forgiveness. Wrapping it in a little bundle of humanity, He pressed it in a woman's arms in a manger in Bethlehem. The angels of Heaven started to sing because the Word was made flesh. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

Once again I repeat--get alone with God if you would have faith.

Again let me remind you that if miracle-working, irresistible faith was to be possessed separate and apart from the presence and person of God, man might use it for evil and not for good. God withholds it from the man who desires to use it for his own glory and aggrandizement, but imparts it to the man who wants to use it for the glory and the honor of the name of the Lord.

There have been many cases, as we travel down the corridors of history, of men who have lost their faith because they have lost their God. It is a well known fact that the depth and sincerity of a man's belief is measured by his nearness to God. It is not so much what you know, but what you are. God has seen to it that the highways of Glory are open to the illiterate and the poor. It is not contact with intellectual understanding that ill bring faith, but it is that beautiful and intimate walk with the One who still will travel with you as he walked with Adam in the

garden before sin separated them in the days of the long ago.

More than once in my humble ministry I have done my best to help people through to a possession of the fullness of one of the promises of God. We prayed but the answer did not come. Then, perhaps days later, they have come to me again with a new step--a new light shining out of their eyes--a new resonant ring in their prayer that has ascended to the Throne. Then the bells of praise started to chime; the thing that was hoped for took substance; and the thing that was not seen became a conviction. Happiness and joy broke over the shores of the soul like waves breaking on the sands of the sea. What a difference! What had brought about the change? They had been closeted with God. They had discovered that in order to have the faith of God-as Jesus Himself instructed his disciples to do--they must have God Himself.

Get alone with God. He will not disappoint you. Get alone with God. He will not let you down. As you feel the sacred nearness of His presence, and as you listen to the tenderness and understanding tones of His voice, doubts and fears and unbelief will slink away and in their places He will impart the faith that you need.

Not from your agony, not from your groanings, not from your struggles--but from the heart throbs of a Father's heart you will get your faith. You will get it not only because you need it, but because you believe Him. He will impart it. Get alone with God.

9. How Faith Grows

It must not be forgotten that while the quality of faith might not be changed, it is certainly possible in the economy of God to increase the quantity.

The reason that the quality of faith cannot be changed is because it is one thing that allows no alloy. Faith mixed with doubt ceases to be faith, and when impregnated by fear very soon loses its potency.

There may be a great many doubts and fears in the human life, but when a man cries out to God in the midst of them, there is faith--some faith, at any rate--endeavoring to reach through. You cannot mingle and merge faith and doubt any more than you can dissolve oil and water. They refuse to cling to each other; one of them will predominate; one or the other is certain to gain the mastery.

The little faith you have today will become the greater faith that will dispel doubt tomorrow if you use it, and refuse to be separated from it. Faith has to be the stronger because God is the author of faith, and the devil and yourself are the authors of doubt and fear. We know that God is stronger than the frailties of humanity and that He is more powerful than all the forces of hell and the devil!

The only way in which faith can grow is to develop it by use. This is a fundamental law in God's economy for the development and growth of spiritual life.

Take for instance, walking in the light. A man cannot walk in the light unless he has contacted the revealed will of God. It might come to him through the voice of the Spirit--understanding through hearing some Holy Ghost sermon--or the unfolding of the riches of the divine Word. To walk in obedience according to the revealed will of God is what we mean when we say that we are walking in the light.

It is generally acknowledged that some men have more light than others. The reason that they have become the recipients of more light is because they have learned the lesson of walking in all the light of the present, so that more light might be given them in the future. If a man refuses to walk in the light today he will discover that tomorrow will be growing dark. If a man will walk in all the light he has today, he will find he will have more light in which to walk tomorrow.

Man must always cooperate with God in the development of his Christian character and in the enrichment of his experience. Light is light in essence and in quality, whether it is great or small. The quantity of faith and the power of it can be increased with each succeeding day.

So it is with faith. To be possessed with an ever-increasing faith one must make constant use of the faith that they have. It is not enough to sit idly by--rocking in

a rocking chair, or even supplicating on one's knees for more faith. To use the faith you have will honor the Lord Himself and necessitate your keeping very close to God.

It is far better to cry out when doubts and fears are battling what little faith you have, "Lord, I believe, but help Thou mine unbelief." You remember the man in the Bible who said that. There was faith there--not very much, it is true--but still it was there. There was also unbelief there. Unbelief that the man despised, hated, and did not want--but it was still there.

He might have quit and wrung his hands in abject misery and said, "It is no use." Had he done so he would have been defeated. There never would have come to him the victory that must have made him shout for joy when he beheld the power of the Lord. Instead, while acknowledging a load of unbelief he exclaimed, "Faith, get to work. Little faith, get hold of God. Little faith, hear His voice. Reach out and touch Him. Do not let Him go.

Little faith becomes great faith when he commences to use his muscles. Never forget that faith is imparted for a purpose, and refusal to use it for the purpose for which it is given will mean that it will be withdrawn. The man who has lost faith has lost it because he refused to use it.

Like a coward he may blame it upon environment, or upon circumstances. Sometimes I have known men to blame it upon heredity. But Christ is greater than environment--more than a match for every circumstance. Even the chains of heredity are broken by the God of the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

The man who cries around that he has lost his faith has nobody but himself to blame. Remember that God never expects the impossible from any man, and never demands more than a man's capabilities will allow him to render. He will not suffer us to be tempted, or as the Greek says "tested more than we are able to bear." There might not be 50 avenues of escape, but the promise of the Lord is that there will always be one.

To the dear people, who through lack of understanding have been sitting around for years waiting for "sufficient faith," I would say without hesitation, "Use the faith you have." It might not be very big, but remember that a little David killed a big Goliath. A little stone of faith from the brook of God's flowing grace can do more than a broadsword of the finest steel forged on the anvils of hell. A little boy carrying a dinner pail with some faith in his heart can accomplish more for God than a whole army who pattern their armor after the fashion of Saul.

How do you know that your faith is not sufficient? Have you tried to find out? What if it does not bring you the answer in as quick a time as your prayer ascended to God? Has it ever occurred to you that if God always answered as quickly as you asked, that your faith would have so little exercise it would never have a chance to grow? You may feel a little pained at the delay, but perhaps they will be growing pains. Keep on keeping on, and you will feel better by and

by.

The Word of the Lord is the pasture in which faith can feed and grow. Faith comes through the Word and it grows and increases by feeding upon the Word. The effect of many a good sermon has been lost and has not acted as an inspiration to faith because people have refused to eat the food of the Word. That assimilated word might have produced faith.

We get too busy with the affairs of the world. Home life and numerous problems manifest themselves and we find very little time for the study of the Word of the Lord. I told you in a preceding chapter that faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of the Lord. To spend a lot of time on our knees praying for faith will not do us much good unless we also go to the place of nourishment--the Word of God. A man would be foolish to pray for physical strength if he did not give some attention to his diet, but insisted on living on nothing but ice cream and pastry.

Reading the Word also brings you in direct and vital contact with the promises of God. The heart becomes persuaded that the promises are true. The Holy Spirit commences to impart faith and the manifestation and exercise of faith makes the promise real.

Reading the Word of God necessarily means that we keep our eyes constantly upon Jesus. How many Christians make the mistake of living on the experiences of yesterday. Even a minute can make a difference; Peter found that out while walking on the sea.

The grace of yesterday will not suffice for the problems of today. The power by which we overcame in the days gone by is not the power that is used in obtaining the victory of tomorrow. The stream of water flows fast--your faith is gone. The water that rippled over the pebbles at the bottom of your yesterday is today lost in the vastness of the sea. God's grace is not a stagnant lake. It is a flowing river. The man that David declared was God's blessed man was the man who was like a tree planted by the rivers of water who would give forth fruit in his season.

It is a very common but pernicious habit to excuse our lack of victory today by the testimony of the triumphs of yesterday. There should be an increase of faith, an increase of spiritual power, a deepening of the experience, and a multiplying or an enrichment of Christian virtues in the human life.

I know the storm clouds lower; I know the problems arise; I know that circumstances harass; I know that the environment is sometimes conducive to fear--but lift up your head, O child of God. Wait not for an army of soldiers of faith to march across the fields of your life; use what faith you have. Shout the victory even though the noise of the storm seems to drown your voice and throw it back in your face. The Christ that heard the cries of the man on the Jericho road above the din and noise of the throng has not lost His power to hear. He hears that cry.

You will stand some day in wonderment at the impregnability of the divine Word and the immutability of the eternal promises of God. God cannot lie-God will not withdraw His oath--God will vindicate His Word; and no power on earth or in hell can prevent Him from obeying and fulfilling His own promises.

The best way to increase your faith is to use what faith you have.

10. Faith in Divine Healing

We now come to a subject of vital interest: namely, the question of divine healing.

Nobody knows more than I do the tremendous protest that the ministry of divine healing has brought about in the Church of the day in which we live. When some years ago a great revival wave of the ministry of divine healing encircled the entire globe, it was not long until the opposition began to be organized, and every honest and dishonest means was used to try to persuade people against it. Books were written by the score; sarcastic articles filled the columns of the newspapers; and even religious magazines devoted page after page to tirades against the ministry of divine healing. I believe the devil was mad. I believe that he was so angry that he commenced to use every weapon at his command to stamp out the belief in the supernatural power of God relative to the healing of the body.

The revival of divine healing ministry came at the close of the Philadelphian age of the church. It was nothing but a natural result of the glory and power of the Philadelphian era of evangelism and holiness. Practically every one of the great denominational leaders who were stalwarts of the faith were hearty believers in divine healing, and many of them claimed to have been delivered from physical infirmities by the power of God. John Wesley filled his journal with it. Andrew Murray wrote a book about it. John Knox practiced it and preached it as he went like a firebrand through Scotland. Peter Cartwright proclaimed it. In later years men of the intellectual caliber and spiritual power of A.T. Pierson championed this gospel truth.

There was not the slightest doubt about it--people were healed by the power of God. It was proving to be one of the greatest forces for the salvation of souls and for the spreading of the fires of evangelism that the Church had seen for centuries.

No wonder the devil was mad. People could behold with their eyes the mighty works of God. Altars were filled with men and women seeking Jesus Christ as a personal Savior. They were not all after loaves and fishes by any means. When a man testified that he had been changed in soul and in heart, they had nothing to go on except his word of testimony until perhaps his life began to prove his testimony; but when the lame man commenced to leap and the lips of the dumb were loosed--even sinful men opened their eyes in wonderment, and the world began to know that there was a God in Israel. As it was in the days of the apostles that people came running together because they heard of the healings that had taken place, so it began to happen in the days in which we live.

The ultimate aim of a public divine healing ministry was not only to get men healed in body, but to get them to God for the salvation of their souls. The

salvation of the soul is of infinitely more importance than the healing of the body. What shall it profit a man if he gain a well body and lose his own soul?

Beginning on the day after Pentecost, the disciples, filled with the Holy Ghost and full of faith and of the power of God, began to pray for the sick. They used divine healing as a means of drawing the people and then preaching to them the gospel of a God of marvelous love. No wonder that the fires of revival swept across continents, leaped over the seas, and invaded the isles everywhere.

There is no doubt in my mind but that this was God's plan. He used it then, and if it was legitimate then it certainly would meet with the divine approval now. But years ago John beheld in the spirit the tragedy that was to take place during the closing days of time. While he was sitting on the lonely Isle of Patmos listening to the surging of the sad sea waves, God gave him that glorious and wonderful revelation that supersedes any spiritual revelation of its kind ever given to man. John beheld a radiant church, glorious and wonderful to behold, standing on the mountain peaks of a Philadelphian experience, begin to succumb to the bombardments of the enemy.

It was not the devil of lust that led his force against the citadels. It was not the devil of drink or of vice that stormed the Philadelphian heights. The soldiery of hell wore no armor but instead they clothed themselves with the equipment of the preacher and dipped their tongues in honey as they spoke. The devil sent his emissaries of reason and wisdom and they declared, "Hail, Philadelphia, we have come to thee in the name of the Lord. We are the revealers of truth that you have never discovered. We are the heralds of knowledge such as you have never known. We are friends of God and we wish to unfold to you the deeper understanding--the rational interpretation of the Word that you have never comprehended before."

Philadelphia began to capitulate. It soon closed its prayer meeting to listen to the lectures on science. Then somebody asked for faith, but faith had gone. The light was slowly flickering out and it was easy for it to be enticed along the road of new research until at last it found itself in the vales of Laodicea. It kept up the old forms. It sang hymns--it prayed prayers such as they were--it built the same kind of buildings; but something was gone. Or rather it was Somebody. It was the power and the presence of the Holy Ghost. So evangelism left the pulpit and reason climbed the rostrum steps. So faith was banished from the councils and intellectualism started to preach. There was no salvation through the blood, no bodily ascension of the Lord, no personal appearing of Jesus in the clouds of glory--these things were all gone. As for divine healing, if ever there was any, it was for a bygone age.

If anybody testified to the fact that they were healed, the Pharisees of the closing days said, "He casteth out devils by beelzebub, the prince of the devils."

Mothers have come to me with tears streaming down their cheeks, weeping because of the growing unbelief of their sons and daughters. Young men and

young women in their teens have sat by my desk and laughed in my face as I have told them that I still believe in the verbal inspiration of the good old Book and all the accounts that are contained therein of the supernatural power of God. They laugh at Mother and call her old-fashioned, and they ridicule Father and declare that he is an old fogey in his religious beliefs, even though he might be a pretty good dad. The modernistic preacher backs them up and declares that we must have a gospel that will fit in with the college needs of this particular day.

What a tragedy! The angels of Heaven must hide their faces as they contemplate such an awful sight. As for myself, I would rather have never known the way--never to have mounted a pulpit step--than to be in the shoes of one of those intellectual giants who have contributed to the spiritual delinquency of the youth of our day. They preach loudly and long about the wrecking of the body while they destroy faith in God and proceed to wreck the soul.

My dear young friend, if such you are into whose hands this book shall fall, let me give you one word of irrefutable logic. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. The proof of the gospel is in what it does. The proof of the Bible is in the fact of the fulfillment of its promises. There might be some basis for your doubt if you prayed to a God who never answered. If there was never a reply, no matter how intently you prayed, then you might have some basis for your assumption that there is no God. When you pray and He answers, you know there must be a God. When you pray for healing and healing comes, then you know there must be a Healer somewhere.

With all of my heart I assure you that if you will be honest enough and sincere enough to come, even in your doubt and in your fear, God Himself will recognize the little flickering flame of integrity and sincerity that I know must lie within your breast.

Let me give you this challenge. By following out what the Bible tells you to do, you will experience just what the Bible says you will experience. God is His own interpreter and He will make plain those spiritual truths that you never have hitherto grasped.

So it is in the realm of divine healing. While others defame and scatter the seeds of doubt and fear--God is still healing people. There are tens of thousands of them who are living today who can testify to the miraculous and supernatural healing power of Jehovah-Rapha. Many of these cases are so evident that even the bitterest enemies of Divine Healing have had to admit that the people have been healed. Oh, how real and wonderful Jesus is to the man who has felt His healing touch! But they deny that a loving healing Savior did it.

11. Faith for Healing

The humanity of Jesus overwhelms me--His understanding of our human nature, His great tender heart, His infinite and beautiful compassion. He never would break the bruised reed and no account in Scripture tells us that He ever quenched the smoking flax. The broken heart He never despised, and the faintest cry always found lodgment in His sympathetic ear.

Did ever a man speak as this man spoke? Did ever a heart love as this heart loved? He, who was God, wrapped around His deity the garments of humanity and placed a human hand upon many a fevered brow. Wonderful Jesus--very image of the Father--who came to make the healing waters flow where every thirsty heart could drink. Wonderful, wonderful Jesus!

The records are simply filled with the story of His healing ministry. The Bible is very clear about them--they were miracles of healing for the physical body. In the second place, He distinctly told His disciples that they were to continue in the ministry of healing that He was imparting to them. In clear and plain language they were told that they were to lay hands on the sick and that they should recover. As a matter of fact, it was to be one of the signs that were to follow them that believe. The Scripture is so clear and so plain that a child can understand it. It receives all the authority it needs for the words were spoken by Jesus Christ Himself.

In the next place, after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, the disciples did exactly what the Lord told them to do. They prayed for the sick and the sick were healed. The Book of Acts is filled with accounts of the miracle-working power of God in relation to the restoration of health to the bodies of men who were sick. In the various epistles divine healing is very clearly taught, and the first president of the first ministerial union that ever convened, the apostle James, wrote plainly and forcefully regarding the position of the Church in this respect. James 5:14 still stands as a lighthouse upon a hill, shining out its welcome beams of truth to every child of God who is suffering from bodily ailment and pain. The lightnings have flashed, the thunders have rolled, the storms of unbelief have reached around the foot of the rock; but the light still shines. There was James 5:14 at the end of the apostolic era and there is still James 5:14 in the day in which we live. Devils in hell, unbelieving men, and faithless preachers have all failed to put out that light.

The Pauline Epistles bring further and added corroboration to those great truths. The ministry of the apostle himself was simply filled with manifestations of the power of Christ to heal.

I understand from the Word itself that no man could ever add to or take away from the words of the completed Book. It is the direct teaching of the Lord that even the Spirit Himself would never again fall on man in such a way as to cause

him to add to the inspired Word. God's revealed will as far as the Bible is concerned has been completed and is final. No man has ever been authorized by the Spirit or by virtue of his own understandings to take away from the completed and inspired Word of God.

I would like to ask the critics of divine healing for the chapter and verse in which it is declared that divine healing would ever be taken away from the Church, or that the hour would ever arrive when it would be against God's will for us to pray for the sick. I challenge them to give me one scintilla of scriptural evidence that would lead any man to believe that the commands of the Lord would ever be abrogated and the teachings of the apostle nullified in this respect. They cannot do it, and they know they cannot do it. So they rise up and say--half of a verse is for yesterday and half of a verse is for today. They tell you to take this and throw out that. Who gave them the authority to wield the scissors of criticism on the inspired page? From what source did they get their authority to take from the Word of God?

Here is where faith comes in. Faith--glorious faith--God-imparted faith--looks up of times through scalding tears and, holding the Word of the Lord high in its hand toward Heaven, says, "Lord, I believe." When the part can contain the whole, then the mind of man can understand the Bible without the help of the Holy Spirit. When time is longer than eternity, then reason should dethrone faith and establish itself as the emperor of our lives. These things can never be.

There is only one possible way of clearing out the debris and the rubbish of unbelief and of modernistic interpretation from the rooms of our hearts, and that is by the exercise of faith in God. Without the slightest hesitation I declare that the man who wants faith can have it. If we are sinners we need not cry in vain. God Himself will fulfill the promises because He perfected the plan. The man who wants to know, by the grace of God can know. Light can shine in the darkest place and understanding can come to the heart that has been clouded by the fogs of unbelief.

We are not swayed by any self-desire--we are not moved by any sentiment when we arrive at the conclusion that divine healing is a blessing that has been provided by the Lord Jesus Himself. Once again we repeat that faith must be founded upon evidence and must be grounded on something that is strong enough to nourish it and to sustain it.

When we consider the ground work of our faith when it comes to the healing of the body, every poor sufferer should shout for joy. It is the shout that brings the victory. It is the anthem of joy that will make the walls fall down. It would be wonderful indeed were we to pray for physical deliverance, basing our prayer upon some promise of the Word of God. There is a sense in which we do that. But it is far more wonderful to believe that we can appropriate our physical healing because it has already been purchased for us through the atoning ministry of Jesus.

Divine healing is undoubtedly an integral part of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Next time you meet around that sacred table with your brethren who form the body of your church--which is the Body of Christ--I want you to ask yourselves solemnly and sincerely a few very important questions. Why did Jesus differentiate between the wine and the bread? Why did He say, "This is My blood" and then again, "This is My body"? If the blood was shed for the remission of sins was there any need for the body to be broken for the same cause? It was a statement of Jesus that the blood was shed for them, and in addition to that, the body was broken for them.

The word that is in the very heart and core of the meaning of the atonement is the word substitutional. From Genesis to Revelation the Bible rings in type and anti-type with the declaration of this glorious truth. Why is it that I shall live eternally? Because Jesus died my death. Why is it that I can walk in holiness before Him? Because He took all of my sins. Why is it that I am redeemed and saved from the guilt of iniquity? Because Jesus not only bore my guilt and carried my sins in the judgment hall of Pontius Pilate, but He carried them before the tribunals of God.

Why is it that we are instructed in the Word by the apostle Paul to rejoice in the Lord? Because Jesus carried all of our grief. Why is it that we are instructed not to be anxious about the things of the present? Because He lifted our anxiety and gave us His promises for the future.

As He took my sin, He gave me His sinlessness. When He assumed my guilt He gave me His holiness. Beloved, the whole super-structure of the doctrine of the atonement would crumble if you took out of the foundation those two glorious words substitutional and vicarious. It must of necessity follow then that if substitution is a cardinal doctrine of the atonement as regards deliverance from sin, it must also be an essential doctrine with regard to deliverance from disease. In other words--if it is true that Jesus carried our sins in atoning for them, then He must of necessity have carried our sicknesses too, if He was going to atone for them in the same way.

One thing is very sure--if healing is not in the atonement then the Christian can only pray for it as a privilege; but if it is in the atonement he can claim it as a heritage. If it is not in the atonement the question of healing becomes a matter of intercession. If it is in the atonement it becomes a matter of appropriation. How can anybody appropriate without faith? By no stretch of the imagination would it be possible for anybody to become the recipient of the blessing except by faith.

You tell me that God could just give it to you without any exercise of faith on your part? That is what a great many people expect God to do. But He does not work that way. If He did that, would you ever seek His face? Would you ever pray? Would you ever draw away from the humdrum of this world and alone in your closet lift your hands to God? Some of you would not even take the trouble to read your Bible--and if God would visit you with health and heal your sickness, you would not even stop to thank Him for it. I know human nature well

enough to be able to make that statement.

A man once contradicted a similar statement I made. He declared that under no circumstances would there be a human being on the face of the earth that would be ungrateful enough as not to thank the Lord if he became the recipient of such a blessing as that. I had dinner with that same man and he never took the time to thank the Lord for the food. As I passed him the bread and potatoes I told him that I was giving him two miracles of God's genius and power. He told me that he grew the potatoes and bought the bread--but what could he have done without God? During the conversation I unfolded the message that God brought to my heart while walking around in his grassy fields.

In that pasture were horses, cows, chickens, pigs, and sheep. They were all eating the same grass. They were all drinking the same water. The same identical water and food was somehow changed to strength in the horse, milk in the cow, eggs in the chicken, wool on the back of the sheep and bacon in the pigs. I then asked my friend if he did not think that was a miracle. He answered that it was nature. But back of what we call the natural is the supernatural. Back of the created is the Creator. To have one you must have the other. He then admitted that it was a miracle. God was behind the food on the table, the clothes on his back, the wood with which his house was built. He was even the Giver of the water that was in the glass by his side. Then I asked him why he did not thank God for them. He made no reply. But there will come a day when he will answer that question.

12. Faith Is the Victory

There are countless millions who receive the blessings of God just as a matter of fact. Because of His mercy He sends the rain upon the just and the unjust, and the grain of the sinner germinates just as quickly as the wheat of the saint. That is part of God's nature.

The manifestation of love is so profound that even the angels must stand in wonderment in contemplation of it. If man would take those things as a matter of course I am convinced that they would take any other spiritual or physical gift in exactly the same way.

So it is that God has designed this means of faith as the medium by which the things we hoped for become real, and the things He has promised become our possession.

In a word, I am convinced that in the matter of divine healing the problem is one of appropriation more than it is a problem of intercession. A man can intercede when his heart is unclean but he cannot appropriate until his heart has been made right with God. He might know how to ask, but he does not know how to receive! He has not yet discovered that faith is the victory. This is the victory that overcometh the world--even our faith.

The faith that is based upon the promises made to the redeemed children of God is intensified when we consider that it is based upon something that has already been purchased.

Paul in writing to the Corinthian Church very clearly and distinctly differentiates between the shed blood and the broken body of the Lord Jesus. The Corinthians were in grievous error regarding the celebration of the Lord's Supper. They were undoubtedly eating and drinking to excess. They were eating to satisfy their hunger and drinking to quench their thirst. Paul called them to shame when he declared, "What? have ye no houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not?" He also declared that they had missed the mark. He told them that they did not understand why the Lord's Supper was ever instituted. In First Corinthians 11:24 he declares that Jesus said, "Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me."

Up to this time there had been no mention whatever of the bread. He did not join these two together and say, "These things do in remembrance of Me," but he segregated and separated them. He said "This do in remembrance of Me." By all the rules of logic this could only mean one thing. The body meant one thing and the blood meant another.

In First Corinthians 11:29-30 we find Paul's position with regard to the meaning of the broken body. He declared that some of the Corinthians were weak and sick and others were asleep. That meant that they were dead before their time. He

emphatically declares that the reason was that they did not discern the Lord's body. In plain twentieth-century language this is what is meant, "Many of you members in the church at Corinth are sick and weak in your bodies and many of your members have died because you have not believed or understood that Jesus Christ bore your sicknesses."

What that church should have done was to have spent the same amount of energy in drawing near unto the Lord as they did in quarreling about the virtues of their various leaders and indulging in the sin of sectarianism that was dividing the Body of Christ. They could have been healed, but they discerned not the truth. Some who were dead could have been alive if they had only availed themselves of the privilege of the atonement.

The prophet of the captivity, Isaiah, turned the telescope down the vista of the years and foretold with minute accuracy the physical events regarding the atoning work of Jesus. He foresaw and foretold the spiritual application regarding His suffering and death. He declared that He was bruised for our iniquities. What is that but substitution? He states that He was wounded for our transgression. It is the statement of the vicarious nature of His atoning work. When the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, that was substitutional. Then he declares with emphasis that with His stripes we are healed.

He did not use the future tense--he did not use adjectives that befog the clear and plain statement of fact. Could anything be shorter, plainer, more forceful, easier to understand--than these words, "By His stripes we are healed"?

Matthew chapter 8 completely knocks the props out of the argument of the man who declares that means spiritual healing. It means nothing of the sort. It relates only to physical healing. It is undoubtedly tied up with the healing of the soul and the forgiveness of sins, because both are in the heart of the atonement. Matthew 8 records the healing of Peter's wife's mother, many who were possessed with devils, and all the sick that were brought to Jesus. Then it declares that these things occurred that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah when he said, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses" (Mt. 8:17).

Many opponents of divine healing have written to me and declared that Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled then. What happened the next day and the next year, they inferred, could never be associated with the statement of the prophet. That argument is false because he was talking about one atoning work. There are not two atonements. There is only one. Half of the atonement cannot fall and the other half stand.

To me, friends, the glorious and eternal truth remains, in spite of everything that has been done and said against it, your healing has been paid for. Yes, paid for, by the Son of the living God Himself.

Why did they whip Him at the cruel post of scourging? Why did they bare His

back and allow that Roman lash to descend upon Him? What stripes was it that Isaiah beheld through the lens of his telescope, and that make him declare under the power of the Spirit that with those stripes we are healed?

Would a loving Father, beholding the culmination of the purpose for which He sent His Son into the world, permit Him to undergo agony and pain such as that if it were not for some purpose? The answer is obvious to every man and woman who will read the Scriptures with an open and unbiased mind.

By what authority did the disciples heal subsequent to the ascension of Jesus? Have you ever noticed the type of faith that they possessed when they came in contact with devils and with sickness? When they saw the man who was at the beautiful gate of the temple, they did not start to cry in sorrow and then lead him off to some place to intercede for God to have mercy upon him and bring healing to his body. To me they acted as if they knew the mind of the Lord in the matter. To me they acted like men who had come from direct contact with God in the power house of the upper room and they were sure that God Himself had power over sickness.

It was not intercession. It was faith. They did not claim that it was done by their power. They certainly acted like men who believed that Jesus had already done it. Using the name that is above every name they simply told him to get up and walk. That is just what the man did.

In plain words the thing that impresses me when I read the account--and the same truth is impressed upon me when I read every account of divine healing subsequent to the ascension of Jesus--is that they acted as if they believed and knew that healing was in the atonement.

Now what has all this to do with faith? It has a great deal to do with the subject of faith because it is upon this great truth that faith must stand when it operates in appropriating healing for the body.

There is a great deal of difference between the prayer of supplication and the victorious shout of faith. One leads to the other undoubtedly. Supplication might cry out of its need without being aware of any promises on which to stand, but faith knows its ground and reaches up to receive.

Are you sick in body, my friend? Do you need the deliverance that only God can give? Have faith in God. Have faith in His Word. Faith is the victory!

Remember that faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Walk hand in hand with the Spirit down the corridors of revealed truth as you turn over the pages of the inspired Word. There is no force under Heaven that can so quickly drive out the enemies of unbelief like the reading of the Word of God. Like Philip in the chariot of the eunuch helping the man to understand is the Holy Spirit who always accompanies the Word itself and unfolds it to the mind of the man who reads. As you read, the Word will grow on you--the promises

will stand out--and you will begin to cry, "It is mine."

As the sinner appropriates salvation by faith, so the sick will appropriate their healing. God cannot lie. He must vindicate His own Word. He must abide by the thing He has promised to do. Heaven and earth may pass away, but the Word of the Lord will remain forever. When even the rocks and the mountains melt in fervent heat, the Rock of Ages that was cleft for me will still be seen in its manifested impregnability gracing and beautifying eternity. Could you ask for a more sure foundation than that?

When the prayer of intercession is over--when the tears of supplication have been shed--stand upon the promises and hold God to His Word. Your weeping may endure for a night, but joy will come in the morning.

As Job traveled from the old burning house to the new one he did not make the journey with a hop, skip, and jump. Just what time elapsed we do not know. But we do know that it was faith that held him steady through every experience of the test.

As one who can say in humility that I have seen thousands of people restored in body by the miraculous and marvelous healing power of God, I beseech you who are suffering to turn your eyes from yourself and the beggarly things of time. Lift them toward the face of One who has not only the nail prints in His hands but with whose stripes you are healed.

If you are tested, if you are being tried--keep turning over the pages of the treasure book of the Bible and as you read the promises of God keep saying within your heart, "Jesus never fails."

There is healing for you because Jesus purchased it. Remember the promise--yours--yours--Jesus purchased it. Remember the promise is yours--your promise--yours--yours. Commence to rejoice in it, praise God for it, hold that Bible to your heart--and sing, and sing again, "Jesus never fails!"

13. Faith and Works

We now come to a study of the relationship between faith and works. That there is such relationship there is not the slightest doubt. James 2:20 declares that faith without works is dead. He tells us in that very remarkable and wonderful chapter that faith is something more than intellectual assent or even belief with the heart.

Faith not only believes, but it does. James declares that the devils believe; his inference is that if faith is nothing more than belief, then it would be possible to say that the devils have faith. But faith accomplishes things. You can have belief without accomplishment. I can say that there is an airplane leaving the local airport tonight at 8:00 for Chicago, but the fact that I believe it will not take me to the great metropolis in Illinois.

One of the troubles with the modern church is that it has some belief with no faith. There is belief in faith undoubtedly, but belief has to be moved into action before it can increase to appropriating faith. You can prove your faith by what you do; faith will prove itself by making you what you ought to be.

Faith must have a body. It must of necessity express itself and as it expresses itself it must be in works. There is always action to it. It is living, vitalized, moving, appropriating. It pulsates with activity--it is vibrant with spiritual life.

Let us examine for a little while some of the concrete cases that are recorded in Hebrews 11, the great faith chapter of the Bible.

The first incident that is given is the one of the elders obtaining a good report. If you will turn to the story of the Exodus, you will discover that there is no mention at all of the word faith in connection with their report. Paul is declaring that they showed their faith by what they did.

We next read of the faith of Abel offering unto God a more excellent sacrifice than that of Cain. But when we turn to Genesis 4 and read the account, we find that the word faith is never mentioned. Once again Paul is declaring that what Abel had when he offered his sacrifice unto the Lord was faith. He showed it by what he did. The sacrifice that was offered by Cain and brought such displeasure to the Lord was undoubtedly the product of the reasoning of this sinful man. Abel proved his faith by what he did, although no mention is made of faith as such in the Old Testament account.

We read in Hebrews 11:5 that by faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, but in reading the very short account of the life of Enoch we discover that the word faith was never mentioned in connection with him at all. He, as we all know, is the type of those saints who are to be translated before the apocalyptic judgments. He lived in a day of iniquity and wickedness. He lived in a time of unbelief. In spite of every environment and circumstance the Scripture declares that he walked with God. One day he went for a walk and forgot to

come back. The Bible declares he was not, for God took him. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, makes the emphatic declaration that what he did was faith. It was not only what he believed alone that made it faith, it was what that belief grew into when it was energized by activity. Faith must express itself--it must have a body--it must be in action.

We now come to Noah. He is another in the good parade of Old Testament worthies whom Paul brings out of the historical past as an example of faith before the eyes of the Hebrews of his day. You can read through the account of the building of the ark and the coming of the flood (see Gen. 6--9) and you will find absolutely no mention of faith. What the Lord does say to old Noah is,

“For thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation.” In spite of the jeers of his friends and the criticism of the apostles of reason he went ahead in obedience to the Word of the Lord and built his ark. Thousands of years later Paul wrote to the Hebrews and said that that was faith.

And so he goes on reminding a race that was befogged and lost in the midst of its own doubts and fears of the faith of their forefathers in generations gone by. He tells them that these men exercised faith before they even had received the promises in the sense the Hebrews of Paul's day had become the recipients of the promises of God.

There is not the slightest doubt but what the teaching of both James and Paul is that faith, to be faith, must be in action. In order to accomplish something you must do something. How in the world could you ever accomplish anything unless you did the thing that you accomplished, or at any rate subscribed towards its consummation. So it is with faith.

Faith acts--it does something--it moves out. Its power increases as we use it. The little stream that flows today might become an irresistible river tomorrow, but it can never become a river if it were to be confined in the banks of a pool. To hide the talent in a napkin and bury it in the ground will never increase it; instead, rust is liable to destroy the treasure you think you possess. So the talent of faith if hidden and buried will begin to decay into inanimate belief and ultimately deteriorate and destroy itself by inactivity.

Put faith in action. Faith that builds the ark before the flood waters come will live to see the vindication of the divine word.

Faith that moves forward, that marches around the walls of Jericho with the elastic step of victory and the bugle notes of triumph, will smash down the walls of Jericho every time.

Faith that never looks back, that takes an Abraham on a road of unknown future, will perhaps bring blessings to the heart, as God sent seed to the Patriarch, as numberless as the sands of the sea. He gave up the present for the future--he said “Goodbye” to the things he had for what was promised.

Faith in testing, such faith as inspired Daniel when they lead him to the lions' den, will open the doors of the palaces of the king and frustrate the purposes of the enemies of God.

Faith on the march goes onward one step at a time, even though the wheels of Pharaoh's chariot might be rumbling in the rear and the seemingly impassible Red Sea be not far ahead. But the faith that marches on will always sit on the hillside of victory and listen to some Miriam and her maidens sing a song of deliverance while they play their tambourines of praise.

So it is that James asked the question, "You say you have faith? What are you doing with it?" He wants to know. If you tell him you are doing nothing, that you just have faith and that it never accomplishes anything--never gets any results--then the apostle declares it is dead.

But when you tell him that you have faith and that faith works because you work your faith, then James is willing to praise the Lord with you. The way to prove that faith works is to work your faith. Give it a body--put it in action--wait not for a ton but use the ounce that God has given you. Before a man can be ruler over many cities he has to prove himself faithful over one. But if he locks up the gate of the city that God has given him and the inhabitants of the soul sleep in apathy and in lethargy, he will never become a George Muller and will never know the power of active, appropriating faith.

On the foundation of God's Word I stand when I declare unto you that all things--not some things--but all things are possible to the man who believes.

When we pray we should ask in faith, and in that faith there should not be an element of doubt. All things are possible to the man who believes--because when he believes, he believes God. Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith.

14. Conclusion

Thus it is we find ourselves at the conclusion of this book, but by no means at the end of the glorious possibilities of acting, appropriating faith. All books must have a conclusion--but faith can have none. It might have its beginning in time--but its effect will be heralded along the vaulted corridors of eternity.

So it is that I climb in the spirit the Pisgah Mountain of my experience and gaze with wondering eyes across the Jordan into the realms of the eternal and the infinite. I see them marching--stalwarts of faith, heroes of the cross--marching in triumph and singing the song of the victor.

The night has passed--eternal day has broken. No longer do they walk around the walls of some Jericho that has to be taken--but they march in victory within the walls of a city whose builder and maker is God. No longer do they blow the bugles for the walls to fall down--they rather blow the golden trumpets of joy because every wall has fallen and there are no more walled cities to conquer. Theirs is the song of the victor. Theirs is the anthem of triumph.

They are all there, those heroes of faith: Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; Daniel and Ezekiel and Joel--and all the worthies whose names scintillate like gems from the open page of the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews.

They are all there, those who lived and died in faith: Peter and James and Paul and Silas and Timothy, together with those who fired the world with the gospel message in the days when the memory of the cross was fresh and the touch of the Savior's hand had not been forgotten.

They are all there, those worthies of the reformation: Luther and Tyndall and Latimer; Knox and Calvin and Whitfield, joining their voices with the ancient patriarchs in singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

They are there, those champions of the faith of our fathers: Wesley and Spurgeon and Booth, together with the millions that worshiped in the church at Philadelphia, whose garments were unspotted by the world.

Methinks as I turn the ear of the spirit away from the noise and din of a world that has lost its faith, that I can hear them singing, praising, shouting, chanting where the waters of the glassy sea murmur a celestial hymn of praise. The song that was begun on earth shall never be finished even in Heaven. Eternity is a long time during which the redeemed of all ages can sing the songs that will make the angels wonder: "Faith was the victory...faith was the victory.., that overcame the world."

This book must have an end, but there will be no end to faith! If you would enjoy that never ending participation in the song of triumph there, you must not forget while you are down here that "This is the victory that overcometh the

world, even our faith.”